



The Certifier

A Newsletter for Environmental Control Certifying Authorities

Past President's Message

by Cheryl Bergener, Washington State Department of Health

It is hard to believe that 2005 has come and gone and I find myself Past President of ABC. It seems like just yesterday I was drafting my message as President and wondering what accomplishments we could achieve during my term. I am truly honored to have served as your President and feel very privileged to have worked with the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, association members, volunteers and staff. I have been committed to this Association for over 15 years and I will continue my involvement in 2006 on the Executive Committee as Past President, and in new areas in the future.

At the beginning of my term and as one of my first official duties, I appointed chairs to ABC's various committees. These committee chairs and their members work tirelessly for your Association and are one of the major reasons ABC is internationally recognized as the leader in support of operator certification programs. These committed volunteers can be very proud of all their hard work and how their work has shaped the certification programs of today. If you are not currently involved with one of ABC's committees, I urge you to take that first step and become a volunteer. I guarantee - you will not regret your participation. You will experience the pride and satisfaction that comes from providing direction and leadership to ABC, and ensuring that products and services are available to our members to assist certification programs in meeting their goals of protection of public health and the environment.



Cheryl Bergener

Regular membership in our Association continued to increase during the past year with the addition of Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality - Water Quality Division, Minnesota Department of Health, New York State Department of Health, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the International Maintenance Institute. I am sure that these new members have already gained from their membership and have experienced the benefits membership brings to their programs. In addition to the human resources that keep ABC strong, we also remain fiscally strong. These strengths combined are what allow us to provide the resources, products, and services to meet the needs of our members.

What's Inside...

New Water Standardized Exams Available	2
Eastern North America Regional Meeting	3
Volunteers Make ABC Excel	4
Calendar	4

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Certification programs are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the certification process produces competent operators to protect public health and the environment. As the Water Works Operator Certification Program Manager for the State of Washington, this charge is paramount to me both professionally and personally.

Operator competency is determined in a number of ways including education and experience requirements, satisfactory completion of exams, and continuing education. One of my goals as President was to have ABC examine the critical importance of training relevancy in continuing education for water and wastewater certification renewal. Requirements for continuing education vary greatly across the United States, Canadian provinces, and internationally, and ABC receives numerous requests for assistance in this area. During the Executive Director's outreach meetings with state and provincial certification programs, the need for such guidelines has also been expressed. As a result, ABC conducted a National Relevancy Workshop in September 2005 with participants from water and wastewater certification programs from the United States and

continued on page 2

Past President's Message *continued from page 1*

Canada, the American Water Works Association, the Water Environment Federation and ABC staff. This workshop was the first step in ABC developing training relevancy continuing education guidelines for their water and wastewater operator certification programs. In October, the Board of Directors approved the next step by forming a Task Force charged to develop implementation and communication strategies based on the National Relevancy Workshop recommendations. When completed, this will be another tool ABC can provide to its members to assist certification programs in licensing competent operators.

ABC continues to be the international leader in providing the highest quality environmental certification examinations possible to its members. The Board of Directors has provided the vision needed to expand the development and marketing of ABC's online testing services. They recently approved the resources necessary for the development of a simulated Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester (BPAT) certification exam. Once developed, states will be able to replace their "hands-on" exams with one that eliminates the need for cumbersome equipment, proctors, and the subjective judgment inherent in the human proctoring of performance exams. The success of this simulation technology may lead to new and exciting options in ABC's other online certification examinations. ABC also began conducting the land application job analysis that should be completed in 2006.

Maintaining the highest standards for ABC's Testing Service has been a priority for other ABC Presidents for a number of years and was also one of my goals. In order to continue to improve ABC's Testing Service I asked that the ABC Validation and Examination (V & E) Committees expand the exam item bank by writing a minimum of 500 new and validated questions. These V & E Committees not only met my goal but exceeded it by writing and validating 799 new questions. This is just one example of the dedication of these volunteers and staff.

These are just a few highlights of what your Association has been doing this past year. There are still many issues that need to be resolved, new tools, products and resources developed and I believe ABC is the Association to accomplish them. ABC's Board, members, volunteers and staff are the "team" proven to meet this challenge. We can all accomplish this together – again if you are not currently part of the "team" it is not too late, now is the time to step forward.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President for 2005 and I am confident that Margaret Doss will do a great job in 2006. ❖

New Water Standardized Exams Available

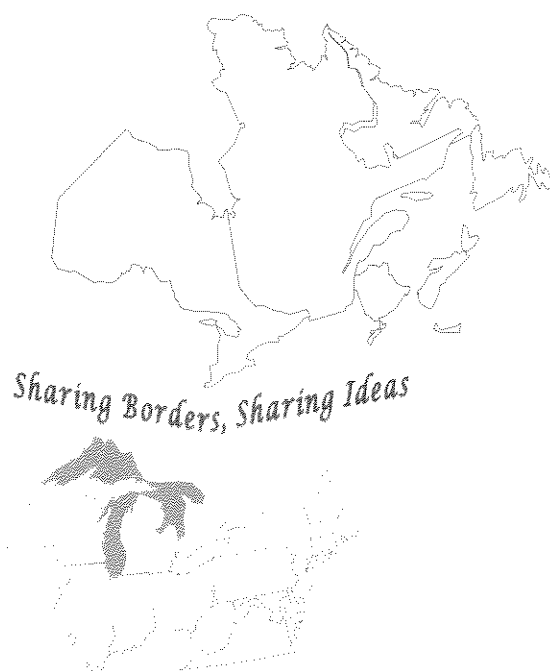
ABC's 2006/2007 standardized exams for Very Small Water System, Water Distribution Class I – IV, Water Treatment Class I – IV, and Water Laboratory Analyst Class I & II are now available. Both sequential and multiple-entry versions of standardized exams are available. In a sequential exam system, exams must be taken in order from Class I (lowest level) to IV (highest level). In a multiple-entry system, operators can immediately take the highest level of exam for which they qualify.

Questions for the standardized exams were selected during ABC exam development workshops held throughout 2005. The exam development workshops were attended by ABC's V&E Committee members, in addition to regular member subject matter expert representatives. Workshop participants included certification officers, certified operators/analysts, and regulators from across North America.

ABC would like to thank the following subject matter experts for providing their expertise and volunteering their time to attend a water treatment, distribution, or water laboratory exam development workshop in 2005:

- Tom Arnbrister, Wyoming Assoc. of Rural Water Systems
- Mike Bailes, Catawba River Water Treatment Plant, SC
- Sean Bauer, City of Kent, WA
- Richard Bond, Colorado Springs Utilities
- Shawn Bradford, Aquarion Water Company
- Bill Brenner, City of Dauphin, MB
- David Candeias, Laconia, NH
- Cindy Cook, Minnesota Department of Health
- Kathy Cook, Ohio Water Environment Association
- Margaret Doss, Columbia County Waterworks, GA
- Wendy Ellis, City of Las Vegas, NV
- Andrew Fish, Vermont Dept. of Environ. Conservation
- Russ Glaser, Clark Public Utilities, WA
- Wes Haskell, Old Town Water District, ME
- Bob Hoyt, Worcester Water Treatment Plant, MA
- Don Jackson, Pipeline Supply Company, SC
- Jess Jones, Operator Training Committee of Ohio
- Chuck Kingston, City of Hillsboro, OR
- Martin Nutt, Arkansas Drinking Water Advisory & Operators Licensing Committee
- Ray Olson, Colorado Water Distribution & Wastewater Collection Systems Certification Council
- Dennis Quintana, New Mexico Environment Department
- Bill Reed, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Thomas Rothermich, City of St. Louis, MO
- Michael Wentink, Nebraska Health & Human Services
- Jane Winkler, Ohio Water Environment Association

Mark Your Calendar!



Eastern North America
Regional Meeting
April 25, 2006
Holiday Inn
Saratoga Springs, NY

Presentation Topics:

- Online Exams
- Continuing Education Relevancy
- Certification Enforcement
- and more

**Please join us in upstate New York for
ABC's first regional meeting
of the new millennium.**

Individuals throughout Southeastern Canada and the Northeastern United States are invited to join in our discussion of a number of timely topics. If you have not been able to attend a recent ABC Annual Conference, this will be an excellent opportunity to share time with your certification colleagues and ABC staff.

The ABC Regional Meeting precedes two events in which you may also have an interest in attending:

- The **USEPA Regional 104g meeting**, to be held April 26 and 27. The Regional 104g meeting is an annual event, convening technical assistance providers from New England and New York State to share their experiences as troubleshooters for wastewater collection and treatment systems.
- An **Advanced Activated Sludge training session**, to be held on April 27 and 28, includes strategies to enhance nutrient removal.

Watch for more information about the Regional Meeting on the "Annual Conference & Regional Meetings" page of ABC's web site, www.abccert.org/annual.html.

Regional Meeting Contact:

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Volunteers Make ABC Excel

by Margaret Doss, Columbia County (GA) Waterworks

As stated by Past President Bergener in her earlier article, one of the major reasons that ABC is an internationally recognized leader in supporting operator, analyst, and emerging environmental certification programs is due to the dedication of its volunteers. This article is an overview of the various volunteer opportunities that exist within the Association with special emphasis on the upcoming Job Analysis.

A foundational aspect of ABC is its testing service. The standardized examinations offered are the culmination of the work by many volunteers in several areas: job analyses, item writing, item validation, item bank review, and exam development. All of these activities are accomplished by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). SMEs are individuals that are already certified in a certain area (like water treatment) and have experience working in that area. Our 2005 water treatment, distribution, and water laboratory exam SMEs are listed on page two of this issue. In addition to these Subject Matter Experts, many volunteers have volunteered their time to participate in other questionnaires and committee work.

ABC is planning to conduct a job analysis for drinking water treatment plant operators during 2006. This will involve each participating operator answering a series of questions about the job tasks they perform. For the first time, this survey will be done online instead of with paper and pencil. I would encourage each certification program official to promote survey participation amongst the operators in his or her region. This will allow the Association to get a broad perspective on the tasks involved in treating water. By March 1, there will be a link on the ABC website (www.abccert.org) where operators wishing to sign up to participate in the job analysis survey can do so.

Additional volunteer positions in ABC include Officers, Directors, committee chairs, and committee members. To become an Officer or Director, an individual must represent a Regular Member, be nominated for a specific office or directorship, and be elected by the Regular Members. Committee chairs are appointed by the President (or specified in the Association's *Policies and Procedures*) and approved by the Board of Directors. Committee members are typically appointed by committee chairs and approved by the President. Normally, an individual first serves as a committee member, then a committee chair before progressing to election as a Director, then an Officer.

I encourage you to become involved as a volunteer with ABC at one of the levels described above. I would also ask that you promote participation in the ABC job analysis and various item bank reviews amongst the operators and analysts within your state, province, or region. With continued enthusiastic support of its volunteers, ABC will remain the predominant Association of environmental certification programs. ♦

CALENDAR

April 25, 2006

ABC Eastern North America
Regional Meeting
Saratoga Springs, NY

June 9, 2006

ABC Executive Committee Meeting
San Antonio, TX

June 10, 2006

ABC Board of Directors Meeting
San Antonio, TX

For information on ABC activities, call
515/232-3623, fax 515/232-3778, e-mail
abc@abccert.org, or visit our web site at
www.abccert.org

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